

Message Text

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FM USDEL ATLANTA

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SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ATLANTA, APRIL 19-MAY 1, 1974

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC

DIPLOMATIC POSTS

USDEL 38 (FINAL FROM ATLANTA)

SUMMARY: USDEL'S PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS THAT IT WAS MARKED BY A PRONOUNCED OPTIMISM ON THE FUTURE OF US-LATIN RELATIONS THOUGH IT DID NOT MAKE MUCH PROGRESS IN ANSWERING FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF OAS FUTURE ROLE IN INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS. ASSEMBLY DID HOWEVER, SURFACE THE DESIRE BY A GOOD MANY COUNTRIES FOR THE OAS TO PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT PART, THOUGH EVERYONE WAS HAPPY TO CONTINUE TO GIVE FIRST PLACE TO THE MEETINGS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS. WITH THE MFMS HANDLING MOST OF THE BIG ISSUES, THE OAS THROUGH ITS SPECIAL COMMITTEE SHOULD NOW BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE MORE OF ITS ENERGIES ON RE-SOLVING THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. CUBA WAS A FREQUENT SUBJECT OF TALK IN ATLANTA, BUT

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WHILE NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, DOOR IS EVIDENTLY OPEN TO

FUTURE SUCCESSFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGE OF SANCTIONS. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT STORY OF ATLANTA WAS WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN HERE - THE ABSENCE OF A HEAD-ON COLLISION BETWEEN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA, THE TONE AND ATMOSPHERE FAVORABLY INFLUENCED BY THE MEXICO AND WASHINGTON MFM AND VERY AGREEABLE AMBIENTE OF ATLANTA. ATLANTA WAS A STEP FORWARD TOWARD MOVING THE OAS OUT OF ITS CRISIS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ATLANTA MEETING OF THE OASGA:

1. THE ATLANTA MEETING IS ITSELF MERELY ADDED TO AN ALREADY GROWING SENTIMENT OF OPTIMISM AMONG LATIN AMERICANS CONCERNING THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN PARTICULAR, AMONG THE SMALLER COUNTRIES THERE WAS AN EVIDENT FEELING THAT THE "DIALOGUE" BOTH IN THE OAS AND IN THE MFMS WAS EXTREMELY USEFUL AND WOULD ULTIMATELY BE FRUITFUL. EVEN SOME OF THE LARGER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS MEXICO AND ARGENTINA, WHO CAN USUALLY MAKE THEIR WEIGHT FELT WITH US BILATERALLY, AT TIMES DEMONSTRATED A DESIRE TO REINVIGORATE THE OAS. CERTAINLY IN COMPARISON WITH PAST GENERAL ASSEMBLIES, THE ATTITUDES WERE FAVORABLE. DELEGATES WERE IN A MOOD TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE U.S. TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS-- A MOOD EVIDENTLY ENHANCED BY THE WARM WELCOME WHICH THE CITY OF ATLANTA GAVE THE DELEGATES. THE MEETING ITSELF WAS NOT A PROBLEM-SOLVING SESSION.

THE TENDENCY WAS PREVALENT TO POSTPONE SOLUTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OAS IN THE OVERALL PICTURE OF HEMISPHERE RELATIONS REMAINED CLOUDY.

2. THE DELEGATES WORKED WITH AN AGENDA WELL UNDERSTOOD BEFOREHAND TO BE LONG ON ROUTINE BUSINESS AND SHORT ON SUBSTANCE. ONLY TWO ITEMS -- MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNC) AND RESTRUCTURING THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM -- OVERLAPPED WITH THE AGENDA OF THE MFMS, AND THESE ITEMS WERE THE CENTRAL ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION HERE.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF MNCS, MOST DELEGATIONS RECOGNIZED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND PREFERRED THAT THE STUDY AUTHORIZED BY THE WASHINGTON MFM HAVE PRIORITY OVER ANY OTHER STUDY ON THE SUBJECT. BUT PERU AND SOME OTHERS PUCHED FOR A SEPARATE OAS STUDY AS WELL. THEY BELIEVE THEY MIGHT HAVE GREATER INFLUENCE ON A STUDY IN THE OAS, MORE ISOLATED FROM THE COMMANDING INFLUENCE OF THE US SECRETARY OF STATE. THE OUTCOME WAS A ROLE FOR THE OAS IN THE STUDY OF MNCS, BUT A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD BE SECONDARY TO THE MFM STUDY,

AND A DESIRE ON THE PART OF SOME LATINS TO ENGAGE THE OAS
IN SUPPLEMENTING THE NEW DIALOGUE.

4. AS REGARDS PRIORITIES IN THE FUTURE WORK OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE, SOME AMBIVALENCE EXISTS -- WHILE THERE
WAS A GENERAL FAVORABLE DISPOSITION TOWARD ATTACKING THOSE
PROBLEMS WHERE PROMPT SOLUTIONS OR CONCLUSIONS MIGHT BE
REACHED, THE LATINS HAVE NOT PUT ASIDE AS A TOP PRIORITY
ECONOMIC QUESTIONS SUCH AS COOPERATION FOR INTEGRAL
DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY ON WHICH
THEY ARE UNITED.

5. WITH ATLANTA, RESTRUCTURING MAY HAVE REACHED A NEW
STAGE. THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE WAS ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED
PRIMARILY AS A FORUM WHERE THE LATINS COULD CAJOLE THE
U.S. INTO POLICIES AND ACTIONS MORE IN THE LINE WITH THEIR
DESIRES. BECAUSE OF A NUMBER OF FACTORS -- AMONG THEM
INITIAL SUCCESSES IN THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS; THE
GREENE SETTLEMENT IN PERU; THE COUP IN CHILE; WAIVERS
ON SALES TO CUBA BY U.S.-OWNED COMPANIES IN ARGENTINA;
AND THE MANIFEST SPIRIT OF ACCOMMODATION REFLECTED IN THE
MFMS -- A NEW TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND
THE LATINS HAS GROWN UP SINCE THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
WAS CREATED. COMPARED WITH THE MFMS, THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
IS A RELATIVELY INEFFECTUAL FORUM FOR RESOLVING THE
CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA.
SO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MAY FOR THE FIRST TIME TURN SOME
OF ITS ATTENTION TO THE MORE TECHNICAL TASK OF MAKING
THE OAS A MORE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT FOR CONDUCTING
MULTILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE HEMISPHERE. THE ASSEMBLY
TOOK SEVERAL CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD STRUCTURAL REFORM--
MOST NOTABLY, STRENGTHENING THE PERMANENT COUNCIL.
NEVERTHELESS, THE UNDERLYING CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE
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U.S. AND LATIN POINTS OF VIEW WILL SURELY SURFACE AGAIN
IN THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE. WORKING OUT DEFINITIONS AND
STRUCTURES FOR "COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY" IS ONLY
ONE OF SEVERAL TOUGH WE-THEY ISSUES WHICH THE LATINS
WANT THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO TACKLE.

6. THE CUBA QUESTION WAS NOT FAR IN THE BACKGROUND IN
ATLANTA. BUT, LIKE THE WEATHER, IT EVOKED MORE COMMENT
THAN ACTION. APART FROM FREQUENT MENTION IN THE SPEECHES
OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS, IT WAS A POPULAR SUBJECT OF
DISCUSSION IN THE CORRIDORS. MOST DELEGATES SEEMED TO
THINK THAT THE SANCTIONS POLICY IS CRUMBLING AND THAT
THE U.S. ACQUIESCENCE IN ARGENTINA'S VIOLATION OF
THE SANCTIONS FORESHADOWS EITHER THE CONVENING OF THE ORGAN
OF CONSULTATION ON THE QUESTION AND/OR THE LIQUIDATION

OF THE U.S. POLICY ON SANCTIONS BY FALL OF THIS YEAR. PROponents OF LIFTING SANCTIONS BELIEVE THEY COULD NOW GET A SIMPLE MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF LIFTING, BUT THE CONSENSUS SEEMS TO BE THAT, BECAUSE OF THE "SPIRIT OF TLATELOLCON" ANY MOVE BY THE LATINS TO CONVOKE THE ORGAN OF CONSULTATION IS PROBABLY SEVERAL MONTHS OFF. THE VENEZUELA AND HONDURAN STATEMENTS DURING THE ASSEMBLY WOULD INDICATE THAT THE PROponents OF CHANGE NOW HAVE 12 VOTES, AND ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF OAS MEMBERSHIP, THUS OPENING THE DOOR TO A SUCCESSFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGE.

7. ONE OF THE IMPORTANT UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS LEFT PENDING AT ATLANTA WAS "JUST WHAT IS THE PROPER ROLE OF THE OAS? SOME OF THE LATINS, PARTICULARLY PERU AND THE SMALLER COUNTRIES, ARE RELUCTANT TO PUT ALL THEIR EGGS IN THE MFM BASKET. THEY SEE SECRETARY KISSINGER AS THE KEY IN THAT OPERATION AND THEY DISLIKE SOLE RELIANCE ON ONE MAN WITHOUT ANY INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. THEY WISH TO AVOID THE OAS BECOMING SO WEAK THAT IT WILL NOT BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT IN THE FUTURE. THEY ARE THUS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO INVOLVE THE OAS IN THE ISSUES BEING TACKLED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS (E.G., MNCS.)

8. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT STORY OF ATLANTA IS WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN HERE. THERE WAS NO HEAD-ON COLLISION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETWEEN THE U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA. THERE WAS NO CHALLENGE TO THE CUBAN SANCTION, EVEN THOUGH A MEANINGFUL ONE COULD HAVE BEEN MOUNTED, THERE WAS NO 22-1 VOTE ON COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY. MAILLIARD

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED ARA DIPLOMATIC POSTS.

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